

Remarks by Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Public Knowledge
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Thank you for that introduction and thank you, Public Knowledge, for this prestigious award.

For the past six years, I've had the great privilege of serving as first Chairman and now Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. And during this time – and for years before – Public Knowledge has been a tremendous resource for me and my staff.

I learned very early that I could rely on Public Knowledge's expertise on policy affecting technology and innovation. And I knew that we share the same commitment to protecting consumers and the public interest.

Our system benefits when companies with financial stakes in an issue express their views, because it is important for members to know how policies may affect their business models. But we also need organizations like Public Knowledge who have no vested interest except looking out for consumers and the public interest.

And that's why I'm so honored to receive this award tonight.

It's a special privilege for me to be recognized with Chairman Rockefeller. Senator Rockefeller and I have been allies for decades. He is a true champion of the public interest. We have fought side-by-side to improve health coverage for children and low-income families. And we have worked closely together on telecommunications policy.

I am particularly proud of the work I did with Senator Rockefeller on the landmark Public Safety and Spectrum Act, which we enacted two years ago. This law will ease the nation's growing spectrum shortage by using an innovative incentive auction to transfer broadcast spectrum to mobile broadband providers. It will provide spectrum for new "Super WiFi" bands. It creates the first nationwide broadband network for first responders. And if all goes well, it will contribute to deficit reduction.

In my last year in Congress, I have tried to focus my efforts on a few key priorities. One of them is net neutrality, which is one of the defining telecommunications issues of our time.

An open internet promotes citizen engagement; it fosters innovation; and it has been one of the keys to our nation's economic success. It is essential that the FCC adopt bright-line rules that protect this essential value. I hope one of my final contributions in Congress will be helping to achieve this result.

As you know, at the end of this year I will be retiring from Congress after forty years of service. I want to thank you for your support over the years and for this evening's award. I will not have the privilege of serving in Congress again, but I look forward to continuing to work with you on the issues we care about.